

MAYOR & COUNCIL AGENDA COVER SHEET

MEETING DATE:

August 7, 2006

CALL TO PODIUM:

**Michele McGleish, Director of
Parks, Recreation and Culture**

RESPONSIBLE STAFF:

**Michele McGleish, Director
Parks, Recreation and Culture
Jim McGuire, Program Director
Dave Ludington, Sports
Specialist**

AGENDA ITEM:

(please check one)

	Presentation
	Proclamation/Certificate
	Appointment
	Public Hearing
	Historic District
X	Consent Item
	Ordinance
	Resolution
	Policy Discussion
	Work Session Discussion Item
	Other:

PUBLIC HEARING HISTORY:

(Please complete this section if agenda item
is a public hearing)

Introduced	
Advertised	
Hearing Date	
Record Held Open	
Policy Discussion	

TITLE:

Resolution of the Mayor and City Council Adopting the Arizona Sports Summit Accords and the Recommendations for Communities developed through the National Summit on Raising Community Standards in Children's Sports

SUPPORTING BACKGROUND:

Parks, Recreation, and Culture staff are recommending that the City adopt the above documents to provide additional framework for the provision of youth sports programs.

In 1999 The Josephson Institute of Ethics (which administers the Character Counts! program) brought together almost fifty influential leaders to discuss the status of sports in the U.S. On May 25 this group issued The Arizona Sports Summit Accord to encourage greater emphasis on the ethical and character-building aspects of athletic competition. The Accord stresses the need for ethics by volunteer coaches, administrators, parents, and participants involved in youth sports. The Accord emphasizes the "six pillars of character" that should be respected when developing a youth sports program. The Accord lays out principles to be adhered to and strategies for reaching those principles.

The National Alliance for Youth Sports (NAYS) is another organization committed to the development of ethical standards and common sense philosophies regarding youth sports. NAYS is the parent organization of the National Youth Sports Coaches Association, which the City has been a member of since 1985. In 1997 NAYS brought together forty eight of the nation's leading experts representing a variety of disciplines affecting youth sports. Their goal was to develop standards that organizations, municipalities, and parents should follow in developing and administering youth sports for children. Out of this conference came the

DESIRED OUTCOME:

Vote on Resolution.

MAYOR & COUNCIL AGENDA COVER SHEET

SUPPORTING BACKGROUND CONTINUED:

"Recommendations for Communities developed through the National Summit on Raising Community Standards in Children's Sports." The findings of the Summit place the responsibility for raising the standards of youth sports on the municipalities that conduct youth programs and also provide the facilities for private organizations to conduct such programs. The educational processes associated with the "standards" should result in the restoration and reinforcement of the positive attributes associated with youth sports.

Staff recommends adoption of the Arizona Sports Summit Accord and the Recommendations for Communities developed through the National Summit on Raising Community Standards in Children's Sports. We feel this is an important opportunity to reinforce the commitment of the City for providing a safe and ethical place to live, learn, work and play!

Please see attachments:

1. *Pursuing Victory with Honor "The Arizona Sports Summit Accord"*
2. *Recommendations for Communities developed through the National Summit on Raising Community Standards in Children's Sports*

RESOLUTION NO. _____

RESOLUTION OF THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL ADOPTING THE
ARIZONA SPORTS SUMMIT ACCORDS AND THE RECOMMENDATIONS
FOR COMMUNITIES DEVELOPED THROUGH THE NATIONAL SUMMIT ON
RAISING COMMUNITY STANDARDS IN CHILDREN'S SPORTS

WHEREAS, GAITHERSBURG is recognized as a CHARACTER
COUNTS! City; and

WHEREAS, the City of Gaithersburg desires to provide youth sports
program experiences that are safe, positive and fun for everyone involved; and

WHEREAS, youth sports serve as a means to teach the youth of the City
lifetime values and skills; and

WHEREAS, in order to realize a fun and positive environment, it is
desirable to raise the standards of the users of our community youth sports
facilities; and

WHEREAS, the City of Gaithersburg employs qualified youth sports
administrators who are trained and certified so as to ensure a high standard
among the users of the community facilities; and

WHEREAS, the City believes that administrators of organizations that
conduct youth programs must be educated on how to provide a positive
experience before being granted access to community facilities; and

WHEREAS, volunteer coaches and families must receive orientation and
education as to their roles and responsibilities pursuant to the effort to raise the
standards for youth sports programs and everyone associated with the program
will be held accountable for their actions and behavior; and

WHEREAS, it is necessary to establish requirements for youth sports to
flourish in an atmosphere that reflects the spirit of the Six Pillars of Character:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and City Council of
the City of Gaithersburg, that the Mayor be and he hereby is authorized to adopt
the Arizona Sports Summit Accord and the Recommendations for Communities
developed through the National Summit on Raising Community Standards in
Children's Sports as the standards for all City and individual organizations to
serve as the framework to govern and operate children's sports programs.

ADOPTED by the City Council this 7th day of August, 2006.

SIDNEY A. KATZ, MAYOR and
President of the City Council

THIS IS TO CERTIFY that the foregoing
Resolution was adopted by the City Council
in public meeting assembled the 7th day
of August, 2006.

David B. Humpton, City Manager

PURSUIING VICTORY WITH HONOR

The Arizona Sports Summit Accord

On May 25, 1999, nearly 50 influential leaders in sports issued the Arizona Sports Summit Accord to encourage greater emphasis on the ethical and character-building aspects of athletic competition. It is hoped that the framework of principles and values set forth will be adopted and practiced widely. The Accord is the result of a summit conference convened May 12-14, 1999 in Scottsdale, Arizona. The summit — “Pursuing Victory With Honor” — was sponsored by the Josephson Institute of Ethics, the CHARACTER COUNTS! Coalition and the United States Olympic Committee, Coaching Division.

PREAMBLE

At its best, athletic competition can hold intrinsic value for our society. It is a symbol of a great ideal: pursuing victory with honor.

The love of sports is deeply embedded in our national consciousness. The values of millions of participants and spectators are directly and dramatically influenced by the values conveyed by organized sports. Thus, sports are a major social force that shapes the quality and character of the American culture.

In the belief that the impact of sports can and should enhance the character and uplift the ethics of the nation, we seek to establish a framework of principles and a common language of values that can be adopted and practiced widely.

IT IS THEREFORE AGREED:

1. The essential elements of character-building and ethics in sports are embodied in the concept of sportsmanship and six core principles: trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and good citizenship. The highest potential of sports is achieved when competition reflects these “six pillars of character.”
2. It is the duty of sports leadership — including coaches, athletic administrators, program directors and game officials — to promote sportsmanship and foster good character by teaching, enforcing, advocating and modeling these ethical principles.
3. To promote sportsmanship and foster the development of good character, sports programs must be conducted in a manner that enhances the mental, social and moral development of athletes and teaches them positive life skills that will help them become personally successful and socially responsible.

- 4.** Participation in athletic programs is a privilege, not a right. To earn that privilege, athletes must conduct themselves, on and off the field, as positive role models who exemplify good character.
- 5.** Sports programs should establish standards for participation by adopting codes of conduct for coaches, athletes, parents, spectators and other groups that impact the quality of athletic programs.
- 6.** All sports participants must consistently demonstrate and demand scrupulous integrity and observe and enforce the spirit as well as the letter of the rules.
- 7.** The importance of character, ethics and sportsmanship should be emphasized in all communications relating to the recruitment of athletes, including promotional and descriptive materials.
- 8.** In recruiting, educational institutions must specifically determine that the athlete is seriously committed to getting an education and has or will develop the academic skills and character to succeed.
- 9.** The highest administrative officer of organizations that offer sports programs must maintain ultimate responsibility for the quality and integrity of those programs. Such officers must assure that education and character development responsibilities are not compromised to achieve sports performance goals and that the academic, emotional, physical and moral well-being of athletes is always placed above desires and pressures to win.
- 10.** The faculties of educational institutions must be directly involved in and committed to the academic success of student-athletes and the character-building goals of the institution.
- 12.** The leadership of sports programs at all levels must ensure that coaches, whether paid or voluntary, are competent to coach. Minimal competence may be attained by training or experience. It includes basic knowledge of: 1) the character-building aspects of sports, including techniques and methods of teaching and reinforcing the core values comprising sportsmanship and good character; 2) first-aid principles and the physical capacities and limitations of the age group coached; and 3) coaching principles and the rules and strategies of the sport.
- 13.** Because of the powerful potential of sports as a vehicle for positive personal growth, a broad spectrum of sports experiences should be made available to all of our diverse communities.
- 14.** To safeguard the health of athletes and the integrity of the sport, athletic programs must discourage the use of alcohol and tobacco and demand compliance with all laws and regulations, including those relating to gambling and the use of drugs.

Recommendations for Communities

developed through the

National Summit on **RAISING COMMUNITY STANDARDS** in Children's Sports

Examining the violent & abusive behavior plaguing youth sports

Presented in cooperation by

National
ALLIANCE
For Youth Sports



III. Implementing The Recommendations For Communities

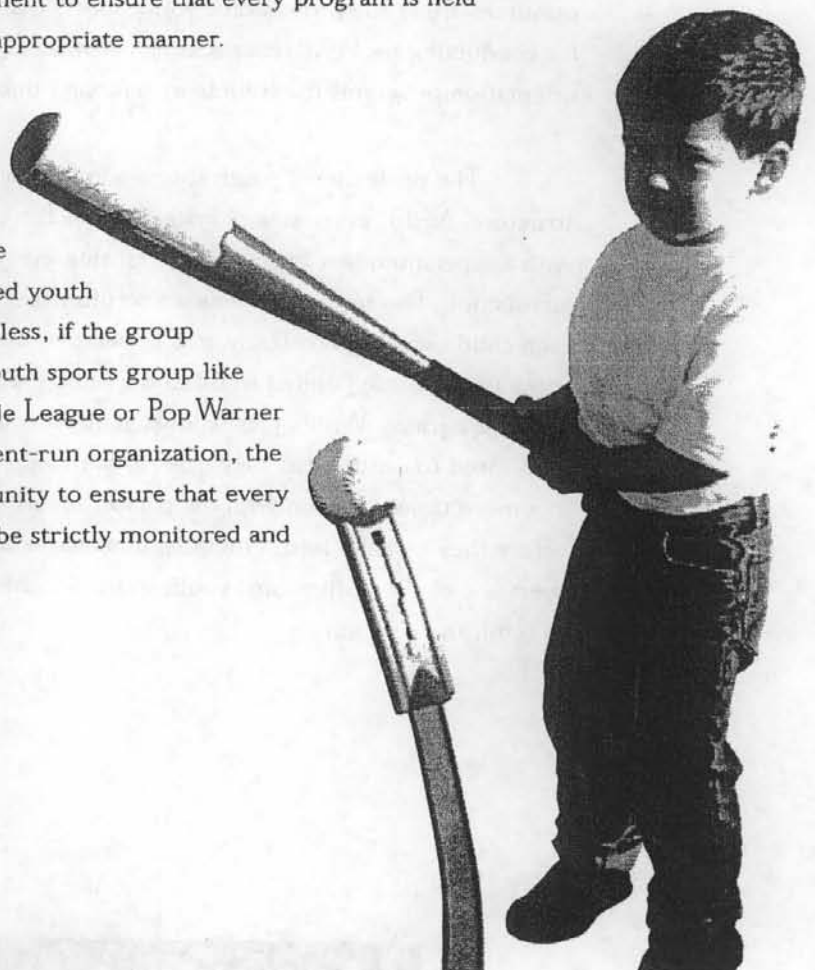
The following is the step-by-step plan that was developed by highly qualified recreation leaders around the country who attended the National Summit on Raising Community Standards in Children's Sports:

Step 1 ADOPTING A COMMUNITY PHILOSOPHY THAT MAKES YOUTH SPORTS SAFE AND POSITIVE FOR CHILDREN

The bottom line is if the leaders in the community believe strongly enough in the value of sports in the overall development of children both physically and emotionally, and that there's a strong consensus that the philosophy of its youth sports programs must focus on putting the needs of the children first, then positive changes can be made to the existing youth sports culture.

First, local leaders must adopt a resolution (see Appendix #1 for a Sample Resolution) that clearly states how youth sports should be operated in their community. The resolution should include guiding principles aimed at enhancing the overall youth sports structure, as well as reinforce the community's commitment to ensure that every program is held to the highest standard and conducted in the appropriate manner.

In order to ensure that this happens, every public entity or volunteer user group using the community's facilities must be required to meet the standards set forth in the resolution. As was mentioned earlier, organized youth sports are a highly complex structure. Regardless, if the group using the facility is a franchise of a national youth sports group like the American Youth Soccer Organization, Little League or Pop Warner football, for example; or is simply a local parent-run organization, the philosophy and rules laid down by the community to ensure that every child has a positive and safe experience must be strictly monitored and enforced equally for everyone.



Step 2 **APPOINTING A PROFESSIONAL YOUTH SPORTS ADMINISTRATOR TO ENSURE ADHERENCE TO THE PHILOSOPHY**

The most effective approach available for ensuring that the community's stated philosophy is adhered to is to appoint a professional youth sports administrator to oversee the entire youth sports operation. This is much the same as in the educational system whereby a superintendent is hired to provide parents with the comfort that teachers are trained and knowledgeable individuals working to ensure a quality education for every child.

Along with overseeing their own programs, the professional youth sports administrator's role is to work closely with each group that applies to use the community's facilities to ensure that the rules and policies are clearly understood, and that deviating from them will not be tolerated in any way. The responsibilities of this position should also include providing information and resources to enhance the sports experience for not just children, but adults, in whatever their respective roles are. Every group that applies to use the community's facilities should be required to go through a brief educational program that addresses the importance of youth sports in a child's development, and what the behavior expectations are for the adults, regardless if they're a coach, official, or simply a spectator. A number of useful resources are at the professional youth sports administrator's disposal, including screening tools for conducting background checks; sportsmanship training programs for parents; and coaching orientation programs for volunteers, among others.

The professional youth sports administrator is a vital component of the youth sports structure. Again, every school system across the country functions at a higher level of efficiency with a superintendent of schools overseeing everything that takes place within his or her jurisdiction. The superintendent is also ultimately responsible for the quality of the education each child receives. So clearly, it is imperative that a qualified professional youth sports administrator is appointed to fulfill the same type of role that is needed for a community's youth sports programs. With a professional youth sports administrator in place, programs can be strictly monitored to ensure that they meet established standards; and problems that arise can be addressed in a more timely fashion with the person adhering to the established protocol for resolving issues before they escalate into something unmanageable. Please refer to Appendix #2 for a complete overview of the professional youth sports administrator's role, as well as the qualifications needed to fulfill the position.

Step 3 *HOLDING EVERYONE ASSOCIATED WITH THE PROGRAM ACCOUNTABLE FOR THEIR BEHAVIOR*

The professional youth sports administrator's role covers a broad range of territory. One of the greatest responsibilities associated with the position is to hold everyone associated with the youth sports program accountable for their behavior to help ensure high-quality programming. In order for this to be achieved, total understanding and awareness must exist throughout the community regarding what constitutes acceptable behavior, and what the established protocol is for policing and enforcing what is deemed unacceptable in the eyes of the professional youth sports administrator. Ideally, the professional youth sports administrator must be a trained and knowledgeable individual, and he or she must have complete authority in overseeing the youth sports programs to ensure total complicity with the policies and standards that have been set forth.



Through the professional youth sports administrator, leagues that use facilities can be monitored and regularly evaluated on their effectiveness. Those who fail to adhere to the policies prescribed through the professional youth sports administrator's office will risk the opportunity to use these public facilities in the future. The office also handles complaints, reviews programs on a continuing basis that lease the facilities to ensure that they are meeting the agreed upon standards laid out in the resolution, and serve as a resource for reporting volunteers that abuse the established code of behavior.

In order to effectively monitor all the youth sports programming, leagues or groups interested in using the public facilities for an organized youth sports program must be required to complete an application and fulfill the established requirements (See Appendix #3 for the Rationale and Requirements for Utilizing the Public Entity's Facilities). Furthermore, facility use will only be granted to those groups who abide by and enforce the written policies and procedures; who require screening, training and continuing education for its volunteer coaches; who require a preseason orientation program for all of its parents; and who provide pre-sports motor skill development programs for young children.

Conclusion

Fortunately, the majority of children who participate in sports have a positive experience. But the grim reality is that the youth sports system that is currently in place in many communities across the country actually facilitates the emotional and physical abuse of children and encourages inappropriate behavior. Every year more and more children are dropping out of sports – not because they don't like to play – but because the system is failing them.

There are several problems inherent with today's youth sports programming that have been addressed that are doing a terrible disservice to children. While many of these problems are well documented in newspaper accounts and on television reports, a significant number occur behind the scenes and oftentimes cause severe damage, as well. It is all of these factors that combine to undermine all the potential for good that exists in programs that are run in the appropriate fashion. Until now, the majority of these problems have been tolerated by most adults, with little concern for their effect on the emotional and physical well-being of children.

The delegates to the 2001 National Summit on Raising Community Standards in Children's Sports agree that the *Recommendations for Communities* laid out in the preceding pages must be adopted to restore order and civility to youth sports, and help ensure that every child who steps onto the local field, court or rink has a safe and rewarding experience.

It is up to individuals within the community to take a stand and exercise leadership for positive change at the local level. There is simply too much at stake to let all the problems that have been well documented continue to destroy organized sports. The highly respected recreation leaders from around the country have spoken on the steps that need to be followed. The *Recommendations for Communities* are the voice of reason.



Appendix #2

The Professional Youth Sports Administrator

Why is it important to have a Professional Youth Sports Administrator?

- To raise the professionalism of youth sports administration.
- To oversee all youth sports in the community.
- To enforce the community's policies and procedures.
- To have someone who is accountable and educated about how youth sports should operate and who can act as a liaison between the recreation department and the community leaders and elected officials.
- To understand the needs of the community (keep a finger on the pulse).

Qualifications of the Professional Administrator

- College degree
- Specific training in youth sports administration
- Maintain professional administrators credential
- Excellent communication skills (verbal and written)
- Commitment to positive and safe sports for children
- Leadership skills essential
- Compensation commensurate with experience and training



Appendix #2 (continued)

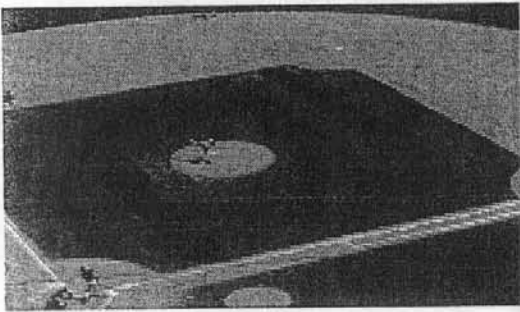
Role and Responsibilities of the Professional Youth Sports Administrator

- The ultimate authority within the community as it relates to youth sports.
The professional youth sports administrator should oversee the entire youth sports community, making decisions that can positively affect all participants.
- Educate and inform community leaders and elected officials on a regular basis.
- Responsible for working with outside user groups and determining Facility Usage
– must ensure that all user groups understand the community's philosophy with regards to youth sports and the requirements for utilizing the public entity's facilities.
- Responsible to provide or oversee educational requirements for all volunteers, including:
 - Volunteer Administrators (Board of Directors)
 - Volunteer Coaches
 - Parents
- Develop relationship and communicate regularly with all youth sports groups that utilize the public entity's facilities.
- Respond accordingly to all complaints and conflicts.
- Develop relationship with other community-based youth sports providers.
- Create a task force of community volunteers who are committed to making youth sports safe and positive.
- Quality commitment - Set example for community with own programs (high quality)
- Continuing education must be compulsory



Appendix # 3

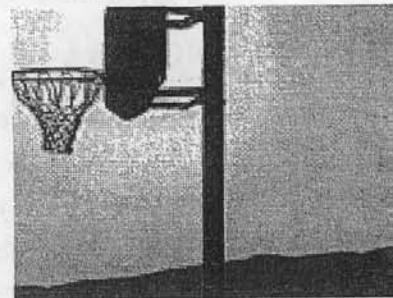
Rationale and Requirements for Utilizing the Public Agency's Facilities



In most communities, sport opportunities for children are organized and administered by the local parks and recreation department's staff, as well as community-based, volunteer parent operated organizations that utilize the public facilities. Generally, these volunteer parent-run interest groups lease the public facilities for league competition (e.g. baseball, soccer, football, etc.) while in some cases also using school facilities and private facilities for practices.

To provide the greatest protection for children, the delegates at the National Summit on Raising Community Standards in Children's Sports recommend that all groups using public facilities must meet high standards. Public agencies (e.g. parks and recreation departments and school administrators) must build collaborative relationships with every organization that utilizes the public facilities to ensure that all children have a safe, positive and fun experience.

In order to build relationships with groups that embrace the community's philosophy with regards to youth sports, the public agency must create a system that fosters quality and accountability. To maintain high standards that promote the well being and safety of children, it is imperative that the public agency utilize an application process to identify and select qualified groups that desire to use the public facilities for organized programs.



To ensure that the entire community adopts a philosophy that makes youth sports safe, positive and fun for children, every group that desires to use the public agency's facilities and fields must be required to demonstrate the following:

1. Each youth sport league/program must provide proper documentation of insurance coverage that meets the minimum recommendations.
2. Each youth sport league/program must agree to abide by the policies and procedures that are established by the public entity.
3. All volunteer administrators, volunteer coaches and parents must successfully complete an orientation program that includes an understanding of the community's philosophy, policies and procedures, and specific knowledge required for each position.

Appendix # 3 (continued)

Education and Accountability Recommendations for Volunteers

- **Volunteer Administrators/Board of Directors Orientation** (for those volunteers who are responsible for the planning and implementation of out-of-school youth sports programs to help them set and maintain high standards for their league for the benefit of the children in their care)

– The following areas should be covered:

- Philosophy of Children's Sports
- Managing Parents
- Managing Volunteers
- Managing Conflict
- Risk Management
- Fund Raising

- **Volunteer Coach Training** (to "sensitize" coaches to their responsibilities when working with children in sports and hold them accountable to a Coaches' Code of Behavior) – The following areas should be covered:

- Philosophy of Children's Sports
- Skills and Drills to Teach the Skills of the Sport
- Injury Prevention
- Practice Organization
- Game Rules
- Legal Liability
- Psychological, Physical and Social Needs of Children

- **Parent Orientation** (to educate and motivate them to create the ultimate youth sports experience while holding them accountable for their behaviors) – The following areas should be covered:

- Philosophy of Children's Sports
- Program Goals
- Role of the Parent
- Role of the Coach
- Providing Positive Reinforcement
- Role Modeling
- Discussing Concerns
- Expected Parent Behavior

Appendix # 3 (continued)

Screening Process for Volunteers

• Each group must screen all volunteers and staff by using as many elements of a comprehensive screening process as possible. The eight steps in a comprehensive screening process, are the following:

- A Written Screening Policy
- Job Descriptions for All Positions
- Completed Application Forms
- Completed Consent and Release Forms
- Verify References and Information
- Interview Applicants
- Conduct Formal Background Checks
- Evaluate Results

